

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05
PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05
USSS-00 OC-06 CCO-00 /098 W
-----141501Z 033654 /42

R 141355Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 328
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 0425

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, ELAB, SEDU, TD
SUBJECT: DEMONSTRATORS CLOSE TRINIDAD CAMPUS OF UNIVERSITY
OF THE WEST INDIES

1. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES CLOSED THE TRINIDAD BRANCH UNIVERSITY ON FEBRUARY 9 FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD FOLLOWING SEVERAL DAYS OF DEMONSTRATIONS, VANDALISM AND ACTS OF INTIMIDATION BY STUDENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE NON-ACADEMIC STAFY. THE DEMONSTRATORS VANDALIZED SEVERAL BUILDINGS ON THE CAMPUS AND THEN SEIGE TO THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. MEMBERS OF THE POLICE RIOT SQUAD WERE EVENTUALLY CALLED IN AND WERE ABLE TO DISPERSE THE DEMONSTRATORS EASILY AND WITHOUT FURTHER VIOLENCE. AT THIS STAGE THE UNIVERSITY WAS CLOSED TO ALLOW THE SITUATION TO COOL OFF.

2. THE UNREST ON THE CAMPUS WAS SPARKED BY AN INCIDENT IN WHICH AN IRISH PHYSICS LECTURE ALLEGEDLY SPAT UPON A TRINIDADIAN TECHNICIAN EMPLOYED IN THE PHYSICS DEPARTMENT. THE ROOT CAUSES, HOWEVER, LIE IN THE WIDE-SPREAD
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DISSATISFACTION WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY, PARTICULARLY IN THE PHYSICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, AND LONG-STANDING GRIEVANCES BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND THE UNION WHICH REPRESENTS THE NON-ACADEMIC STAFF. UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS ARE MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STUDENTS AND THE UNION TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS. DESPITE THE UNION'S ATTEMPTS TO POLITICIZE THE DISPUTE

AND WIDEN THE AREAS OF CONFRONTATION, THE UNIVERSITY IS EXPECTED TO RE-OPEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

3. COMMENT: THE TROUBLE AT THE UNIVERSITY WAS THE RESULT OF SEVERAL SEEMINGLY UNRELATED FACTORS OF RELATIVELY LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE, WHICH COMBINED TO FORCE THE CLOSURE OF THE UNIVERSITY FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE BLACK POWER DEMONSTRATIONS IN 1970. THE TROUBLE AT THE UNIVERSITY IS NOT, HOWEVER, RELATED TO POLITICAL ACTIVITY ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY AND DOES NOT PRESAGE FURTHER VIOLENT ACTIONS EITHER AT THE UNIVERSITY OR IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY.
FAY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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